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Cultural Hints On The Youngberry For The Central West



Plants on the left are two years old, while those on the right are one year old.

THE Youngberry is one of the newer and less widely grown of the brier fruits. It is an extra large berry and has so many uses to which it can be put that a little extra cultural treatment can very profitably be placed upon it.

During the hot dry summer of 1934, the Youngberry grew luxuriantly and kept up the producing of large luscious berries right through the hot dry weather, not a full crop to be sure, but a crop that sold readily and left some margin of profit. Its rampant growth without being bothered by insects or fungus diseases looks good to the berry grower. Also, the maturing and ripening of the crop just at the close of the strawberry season brings it in on a market that is usually short of berries. But the very fact of its robust growth brings us face to face with the most difficult problem in its cultural treatment, and that is the handl-

ing or summer pruning of the new growth which is to become the bearing wood for the following year. In the Southern states of Louisiana and Mississippi, growers get by and simplify the growing by cutting off all wood, new and old, down to the ground, removing and burning all brush, after which clean cultivation can be started immediately. The long growing season makes it possible to grow sufficient new growth after fruiting to have an abundance of bearing wood for the following year's crop, and just how far north this method can be practiced must be determined by each individual grower experimenting for himself. I prefer March and April as being the one best time to plant, although November set plants have done equally as well.

Secure good healthy disease-free tip plants, mark out rows $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart and set the plants 6 feet apart in rows, spreading out root and being sure the crown of the plant is pointing up. An application of horse or cow manure placed in the furrows between the plants gives the young plants a good start off and is quite a help in the life of the patch. After giving clean cultivation for the first summer and leaving the new growth trail on the ground until the following spring, I drive 5 ft. stakes every 18 feet apart in rows, anchoring down end posts, and stretch up wires (No. 12) 25 to 40 inches from the ground, and on these I put up the canes the following spring after all danger of hard freezing weather is past. I spread them fan shaped on the wires, cutting off all unnecessary long growth, keeping just enough to fill up the trellis. I pinch back the young canes in their early stage of growth, the object being to get more canes and not such long ones, keeping in so far as possible the bearing wood back close to the mother plant.

Now the putting up of the canes is the one big job, all other operations being comparatively easy. The picking is simplified by having the vines on the trellis, as the fruit stems are long and hang well out from the vines, and being such large solid berries,

they are quickly and easily picked. The illustration given herewith shows four rows on the right, one year set, and the ones on the left two years old and put up on trellis as described above.

I sold youngberries during the summer of 1934 to grocers for \$3.00 per crate of 24 quarts. All who have used my youngberries during the past two years are strong in their praise of them as a canning berry, making the very richest juice and jelly. Some prefer them to eat raw with sugar and cream to any other berry.

Now as to their cultural needs to make them a profitable proposition for the commercial grower. I feel sure that up to the present time there has not yet been worked out any one best method of handling them, but here is my method that has brought comparatively satisfactory results. After the vines have been put upon the trellis and cultivation well under way, I found the 5-shovel cultivator and the grape hoe a great help and a labor saver, enabling me to get the work done on time. Along about the time they began to bloom, I cut back the new growth that springs up from the ground to 8 or 12 inches, the object being to induce the plant to throw out more canes, rather than to have a few very long ones. Then, too, having more canes closer to the ground leaves more bearing wood to choose from the following spring, as well as acting as a crop insurance from winter killing of canes during the extreme cold months. Two prunings back may be even better than one, unless we have pruned back to the ground after fruiting, in which case the above does not apply. The application of 100 lbs. per acre of 16 per cent acid phosphate in the fall scattered along the rows, also the application of 100 lbs. per acre of Ammonium Sulphate in the spring, will be a great help in producing quality berries that are solid and handle well.

The juice of the youngberry is so rich and of such good quality that after youngberries are grown in sufficient quantities a juice factory for the handl-

ing of the products may well be worked out as a profitable enterprise. However, as long as there is the demand that now exists for the fruit in the raw state, and the price remains somewhere near what it now is, growers will not worry about a market or outlet for their surplus.

For the benefit of all small place owners who wish to try a neat, well-ordered plan of growing youngberries on city lots here is Mr. James' method. He has iron pipes for posts driven in the ground about 20 feet apart and three wires stretched on these about 25, 40 and 55 inches, respectively, from the ground. After the fruiting season is past, he cuts everything down to the ground, both young and old wood, cleaning and burning the patch completely and thoroughly and begins clean cultivation. The new growth will start up from the ground immediately, and as it grows it is trained or tied upon the three wires before mentioned. When cold freezing weather arrives in fall, the three wires are unhooked from the posts and with the vines fast to them are laid flat on the ground where they remain until the following spring. After hard freezing weather is past the wires with the vines fast to them still attached are hooked back to the posts and clean cultivation given as before. Rich ground which is usually found in gardens of the city dweller surrounded by buildings which break the sweep of cold biting winds furnishes ideal growing conditions for growing the youngberry.

The above method will reward the grower with the largest finest flavored berries. Mr. James is thinking of using a straw mulch instead of clean cultivating, a method he has used in the growing of Latham red raspberries and one in which he has been very successful.

Now as to the condensed planting and culture of this most promising berry. Set the plants either in November or early spring [March or April] 6½ by 6 feet apart, keep cleanly cultivated the first year, pinching back new growth twice. Leave lie

Through arrangements made with the introducers and their Eastern distributors we are now able to supply our customers with the New Acme thornless Youngberry plants. These plants are covered by U. S. Patent No. 4, and propagation for sale without consent of Patentee is forbidden by law.

While the berries are of the same large size and fine quality the introducers claim they are earlier and continue in bearing longer than the thorny variety. They are smooth like a grapevine and are very much easier to handle. Prices for 1935 delivery of good plants are as follows:

By mail or express paid	
1 plant	.50¢
6 plants	\$1.15
3 plants	.85¢
12 plants	2.00
25 plants	3.50

Shipping charges collect	
50 plants	\$4.75
100 plants	7.75
200 plants	15.00

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on ground first winter and put up on trellis in spring. To be sure, the richer the ground and the better the care, the better the harvest will be, and when the strawberries are gone, the youngberry will be ripe to pick, large and fine with a market hungry for berries. Low-lying, moist ground that DOES NOT overflow or remain sogged wet for a long time is ideal ground for the growing of this berry.

Detailed description of the one largest job of youngberry growing, the putting up on the trellis in spring: first pick out the strongest and longest cane and hang over top wire spread out fan shaped from ground to top wire and hold in place. Cut off balance of cane. Proceed in like manner until the best canes are used or the trellis filled about 7 or 8 inches apart. Cut off the rest. Never take up a bunch of canes and wad them together around wire.

Never have canes on trellis crowded so buds cannot develop, as the canes which come out from buds with the flowers and fruiting canes will be 8 to 12 inches long and hang well out from leaves and canes making the fruit very easy to pick.

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